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## **WATERSHED LESSON #5:**

### ***Plans Only Succeed if Implemented***

Plans are essential in that they represent the consensus achieved among watershed stakeholders. Typical components of a plan include: vision, goals, action items, and time frame (see Watershed Lesson #1). Time frames for plans typically range from 5 to 20 years. The best plans allow for the incorporation of new information, reflect the needs of the watershed, and have the commitment of the community behind them.

The greatest challenge associated with watershed planning is to ensure that the recommendations called for within a plan are implemented and that the plan does not sit on a shelf gathering dust in some office. A key element in implementing a plan is charging an individual or organization with the responsibility to follow through and work with key constituencies to take the actions laid out in the plan (see Watershed Lesson #3). It is also important to break things down to a manageable scale. This often involves a “nested approach” in which broad goals are set for large watersheds but subwatersheds are used to implement and achieve those goals.

### ***An Analysis of Urban Watershed Plans***

#### ***Tom Schueler’s Insights into What Works and What Doesn’t***

Tom Schueler, Executive Director, Center for Watershed Protection, interviewed a number of watershed practitioners from a wide cross-section of disciplines (planners, municipal officials, consultants, scientists, and others) and found that most agree that the majority of plans developed in the past have failed to adequately protect their watersheds. A chief reason is that they were drawn up on too large a scale -- 50 square miles or more. Too many subwatersheds and their individual problems had to be consolidated, and the focus of the plans became blurred. As the number of stakeholders proliferated, responsibility for implementing the plans became diffused. In short, says Schueler, the planning process got too big, too complicated to be effective.

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have 10 to 50 subwatersheds to manage***

Based on their analysis of these first-generation watershed plans, the Center proposed a dozen elements that every plan should incorporate. Chief among them, the plan should be developed around the subwatershed unit--one having a drainage area of 2 to 15 square miles. Due to their size, many subwatersheds are entirely contained within a single political jurisdiction, which helps to establish a clear regulatory authority. A typical municipality or county might have 10 to 50 subwatersheds to manage. Or a small scale, such as this, subwatershed mapping, monitoring, and other study tasks can be completed relatively quickly (6 to 12 months) and the entire management plan completed within a

year.

The Center also underscored the need to create an authority, either at the watershed or subwatershed level, that is invested with the primary responsibility for implementing the plan. Perhaps the greatest reason cited for consigning plans to the bookshelf where they languished in obscurity was that no one was required to pull them down and use them as a routine part of the land development process.

***For more information:*** contact Thomas R. Schueler, 301-589-1890, 301-589-8745(fax).

## ***Cedar River, Washington Local Government Is Not a Missing Piece***

Jean White, project manager for the *Cedar River Basin Plan* in Washington State and with the King County Water and Land Resources Division, has been charged with implementing the plan that was developed for Cedar River by a variety of interests including state, local, and tribal governments, business and community representatives. Essentially, her goal is to make the plan's recommendations a reality on the ground. Part of this includes having it formally adopted by King County as policy; the other part is getting projects in place.

### ***Two homes have been purchased and four others are in negotiation to be purchased.***

As Jean describes it, the plan is quite ambitious with about \$64 million worth of effort and three priorities: habitat protection and restoration, flood protection, and water quality improvement. A list of priority habitat acquisition sites has been developed and many sites have already been purchased. A list of 80 potential habitat restoration projects has also been developed and several have been completed. The plan calls for purchasing and relocating over 100 homes in the most flood prone areas on a voluntary basis. Two homes have been purchased and four others are in negotiation to be purchased. To improve water quality, the plan calls for improved storm water control in new developments and emphasizes reducing problems before they start.

The formation of the Cedar River Council as a public forum to address Cedar River issues has raised public awareness, understanding, and support for the actions called for in the plan. In addition, the leadership of Larry Phillips, chair of the Cedar River Council, has been critical, especially in helping to obtain funds to support plan implementation.

Demonstrating success has also been important. For example, it is very persuasive to be able to take residents to one of the stream restoration sites and show the progress that has been made.

As for lessons to share, Jean, who has worked with nonprofits as well as at the State level, feels that getting the local government involved is often a missing piece. Given the fact that local government controls land use and has access to funding and decision-making authority, she believes they are critical players in making the watershed approach a reality.

Another thing that has worked well for King County is their River Basin Stewards. A Basin Steward acts as a community contact who answers citizen questions and requests and organizes volunteer stewardship events.

***For more information:*** contact *Jean White*, Project Manager, Cedar River Basin Plan, Staff for Cedar River Council, Surface Water Management Division 206-296-1479, 206-296-0192 (fax), [jean.white@metrokc.gov](mailto:jean.white@metrokc.gov).

## ***McKenzie Watershed Council, Oregon***

### ***Action at the Subwatershed Level***

Over 200,000 residents of Lane County, Oregon, depend on the McKenzie River watershed for their drinking water. They also use the river for fishing, rafting, and other recreational activities. Agricultural and other industrial users rely on the river to supply them with large amounts of high quality water for their operations. Development in the McKenzie Watershed and other pressures have in recent years threatened the capacity of the river to sustain the quality of its water.

A partnership of two local governments led to the creation of the McKenzie Watershed Council. Lane County and the Eugene Water & Electric Board acted as conveners to organize, seek start-up funds, and provide early support and direction. The Council's mission statement reads: "*To foster better stewardship of the McKenzie River Watershed resources, deal with issues in advance of resource degradation and ensure sustainable health, functions, and uses.*" The 20-member council was formed in 1993 and is made up of private citizens, public interest groups, locally elected officials, representatives of state government, as well as representatives of the Bureau of Land Management, Army Corps of Engineers, and the U.S. Forest Service. EPA provided start-up funds and the NRCS and BPA (Bonneville Power Administration) have contributed funds for completing the action plans and public outreach.

The Council adopted a work program which focused on four topics: water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, recreation, and human habitat. The Council has adopted Action Plans for all four work program topics and has begun implementing several of the prescribed actions, including three key programs: watershed-wide water quality monitoring, citizen water quality monitoring, and restoration and enhancement projects.

#### ***Watershed-wide Water Quality Monitoring Program***

With the Eugene Water & Electric Board, a local utility, taking the lead, the Council worked with a team of technical advisors to put into place a coordinated approach to long-term water quality monitoring. The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality conducts the monitoring at seven stations in the watershed, as well as providing part of the funding. Other funding comes from council partners Eugene Water & Electric Board, Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Forest Service. Since its inception in November of 1995, the monitoring program has expanded cooperation among the council, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, and technical advisors from both the public and private sectors.

### ***Citizen Monitoring Program***

A partnership with RARE (Resource Assistance to Rural Environments, part of the President's Americorps Program) has been critical to the success of the McKenzie Watershed Council's Citizen Monitoring Program. This volunteer program engages students throughout the watershed in the evaluation and monitoring of water quality parameters, and has been a very effective outreach tool. Started with a grant from the state in 1995, the program now involves over 200 students from six schools monitoring five sites on a weekly basis. RARE workers have been involved from the beginning—from designing the pilot program to training students and working with them on a weekly basis to do the sampling over the last two years.

### ***Restoration and Enhancement Projects in the Mohawk Watershed***

The East Lane Soil and Water Conservation District, with funding and technical assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, targeted the Mohawk subwatershed, the largest tributary to the McKenzie, for establishing demonstration projects and conducting outreach. They have been assisting the Mohawk Watershed Planning Group, comprised of local landowners, in developing and implementing a plan at a subwatershed level. The Council serves as an umbrella organization for the Mohawk group and others like it, providing broad direction, support, and assistance in seeking resources for implementation.

The efforts in the Mohawk have resulted in over two dozen local landowners coming forward to enhance their own stream banks. The projects have ranged from fencing cattle away from streams to plantings along riparian areas on golf courses. In addition, over 9,000 native trees and shrubs have been planted in partnership with several programs, including the Youth Corps, the Jobs-in-the-Woods dislocated timber workers program, students from five schools, and innumerable community volunteers. Students at Mohawk High School have planted an arboretum, and a local science teacher and garden club have adopted a Native Plant Salvage Nursery.

***For more information:*** John Runyon, Watershed Coordinator, McKenzie Watershed Council, P.O. Box 1025, Corvallis, OR 97333, 541-758-0947, 541-766-8336 (fax), runyon@poraxis.com; Laurie Power, Environmental Manager, Eugene Water & Electric Board, PO Box 10148, Eugene, OR 97440, 541-341-8525, FAX 541-984-4724,

laurie.power@eweb.eugene.or.us; Megan Smith, RARE Coordinator, UO Community Planning Workshop, 1209 UO, Eugene, OR 97403, 541-346-3889, FAX 541-346-2040, smith@darkwing.uoregon.edu; Lorna Baldwin, Watershed Planner, East Lane Watershed Soil and Water Conservation District, 541-465-6648, 541-465-6483 (fax), lbaldwin@efn.org

## ***Key Contacts and Resources***

### **IMPLEMENTING URBAN PLANS**

- ***Crafting Better Urban Watershed Protection Plans***, Thomas R. Schueler, Center for Watershed Protection, 8737 Colesville Road, Suite 300, Silver Spring, MD 20910, 301-589-1890, 301-589-8745(fax), <http://www.pipeline.com/~mrrunoff/> Nice analysis of how to keep local watershed plans from sitting on the shelf. Addresses impervious surfaces as a key indicator in watersheds.

### **FINANCING PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

- ***Beyond SRF: A Workbook for Financing CCMP Implementation***, US EPA, EPA 842-B-96-002, August 1996. Guide designed to provide innovative financing ideas for implementation of plans under the National Estuary Program. 1-800-490-9198. Ideas are transferrable beyond the NEP program.
- ***EPA Clean Water Act Section 319 Grants Guidance***, grant support through states to support nonpoint source control, [www.epa.gov/OWOW/NPS/guide.html](http://www.epa.gov/OWOW/NPS/guide.html) or contact EPA Nonpoint Source Branch, US EPA, 401 M Street, S.W., 4503F, Washington, D.C. 20460, 202-260-7100.

### **EXAMPLE PLAN**

- ***McKenzie Watershed Council, Action Plan for Recreation and Human Habitat and Summary and Highlights of Accomplishments***, March 1997, John Runyon, Coordinator, McKenzie Watershed Council, 541-758-0947, 541-766-8336 (fax) Plan outlines vision, goals, and priority action items.

### **GUIDANCE FOR STIMULATING SUPPORT**

- ***Sourcebook for Watershed Education*** provides details on creating or enhancing programmatic support for watershed education and problem solving. It includes information on developing program vision and goals, obtaining community support and participation, program review and assessment, and sharing your story with others. Developed by Global Rivers Environmental Education Network, 206 South Fifth Avenue, Suite 150, Ann Arbor, MI 48104, [www.econet.apc.org/green/](http://www.econet.apc.org/green/) (313) 761-8142.